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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/54/L.34/Rev.1 and Add.1)*]

54/98. Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 49/139 B of 20 December 1994, 50/19 of 28 November 1995 and 52/171 of 16 December 1997,

Reaffirming also its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 47/168 of 22 December 1992, 48/57 of 14 December 1993, 49/139 A and B of 20 December 1994, 50/57 of 12 December 1995 and 51/194 of 17 December 1996 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 of 28 July 1995 and 1996/33 of 25 July 1996,

Recognizing that recent events emphasize the need for the international community, in addressing the growing magnitude and complexity of natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, to rely not only on the formulation of a well-coordinated global response within the framework of the United Nations but also on the promotion of a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development,

Recalling that prevention, preparedness and contingency planning for emergencies at the global level depend, for the most part, on the strengthened local and national response capacities as well as on the availability of financial resources, both domestic and international,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General,[1] prepared in pursuance of its resolution 52/171 on the participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development;

2. *Encourages* voluntary national and regional actions aimed at making available to the United Nations system, through the United Nations Volunteers, national volunteer corps such as the White Helmets on a standby basis, in accordance with accepted United Nations procedures and practices, in order to provide specialized human and technical resources for emergency relief and rehabilitation;

3. *Expresses its appreciation* for the commendable progress of the White Helmets initiative as a singular voluntary international effort to provide the United Nations system with volunteer expertise to respond, in a quick and coordinated manner, to humanitarian relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, while preserving the non-political, neutral and impartial character of humanitarian action;

4. *Recognizes with appreciation* that the White Helmets, in close cooperation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and as an operational partner of the United Nations Volunteers, are an efficient and viable mechanism for making pre-identified and trained homogeneous teams available to the United Nations system, in support of immediate relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities, in the light of the increasing number, growing magnitude and complexity of natural disasters and other emergencies;

5. *Calls upon* Member States to promote the facilitation of cooperative actions between the United Nations system and the civil society, through national volunteer corps, in order to strengthen the United Nations capacities for early and effective response to humanitarian emergencies, and invites them to make the commensurate financial resources available through the special financing window of the Special Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Volunteers;

6. *Encourages* Member States to identify and support their respective national focal points for the White Helmets in order to continue to provide the United Nations system with an accessible global network of rapid response facilities in case of humanitarian emergencies;

7. *Invites* Member States, international financial institutions, regional organizations and the United Nations system to consider ways and means to ensure the integration of the White Helmets initiative into their programme activities, particularly those related to humanitarian and disaster relief assistance;

8. *Invites* the Secretary-General, on the basis of the experience acquired, to consider further the potential use of White Helmets as a resource for preventing and mitigating the effects of emergencies and post-conflict humanitarian emergencies and, in this context, to maintain an adequate structure for the White Helmets liaison functions, taking into account the ongoing reforms process;

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[1] A/54/217.

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to conclude his consideration of the possible strengthening and broadening of consultative mechanisms to promote further and operationalize the concept, as referred to in paragraph 14 of his report and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, under the item entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", on the actions taken in conformity with the present resolution.

73rd plenary meeting
8 December 1999